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de los Perros to 1606-1608. These, it is true, are mere approximations; but they are approximations based upon evidence which, such as it is, lends no support to the view that Cervantes wrote the majority of his *Novelas* between 1599 and 1603. At least eight of the twelve were composed later." Much else that is extremely interesting follows upon the innumerable imitators of Cervantes both in and out of Spain, and no student of the greatest Spaniard can afford to fail to read carefully this painstaking and very searching introductory essay by Mr. Fitzmaurice-Kelly, by far the most comprehensive, the most logical, the best that has yet appeared upon the subject.

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FRENCH LITERATURE.

L. E. Kastner and H. G. Atkins: A Short History of French Literature. New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1901. xvi + 312 pp.

Some fifteen or twenty years ago a course in literature was written entirely from the critical point of view: Students were taught not so much what an author thought himself, as what they ought to think of him. This practice had gone so far that a reaction was bound to come, and the spirit of positivism which had already victoriously invaded almost every domain of human thought, made itself felt also in the treatment of literature. An era of facts, dry facts, without any effort to explain to the pupil their connection or their meaning, followed. For fear of conveying a wrong impression, all critical understanding was given up. As the pupil cannot be expected to reflect by himself, or else as he does it in a childish way, the remedy was about as bad as the evil it was intended to correct. From Charybdis we fell into Scylla.

By and bye an intermediate and more adequate treatment of the subject will no doubt prevail. Already a few signs could be pointed out of a tendency to give to literature its place in our universities and colleges, as distinct from philology on the one hand, and from historical researches in the field of literature on the other.

The "Short History of French Literature" by Messrs. Kastner and Atkins, of Cambridge, England, though betraying a slight move in the direction of progress, remains nevertheless an unmistakable illustration of how much we are still under the influence of the "heap of facts" system one need only consider how many names and works and dates occur, the effect of which, in a primer of French Literature, can only bewilder the student, or at any rate cannot contribute to his understanding of literature; therefore in our judgment they are useless, if they do not cause positive harm. Facts should be granted value according to their quality and not according to their quantity. It seems unnecessary to burden one's memory with such names as Philippe de Thaon, Richard de Fournival (p. 31), Maurice Scève (p. 49), Louise Labé (p. 50), even Nicole de la Chanaye and Jean de Pourtalès (p. 50), or Molinot, Meschinot and Cretin (p. 40), or still Jean de Beaubreuil, Daigaliers, Ogiers (p. 109). We know why the authors have adopted this plan. The Preface informs us that their aims were 1) to meet the "requirements of candidates for examinations," and 2) to offer "a reliable introduction to the study of French literature for all those who desire to become acquainted with the subject." Messrs. Kastner and Atkins follow, of course, the prevalent custom, and thus are not wholly responsible. But whether this custom is a good one is a different matter. It seems rather regrettable that the two purposes indicated should be considered separately: Knowledge for examination and knowledge for science, rote-knowledge and intelligent knowledge.

An attempt has been made to remedy this defect. A chapter entitled "General View" has been placed before each period. These pages are certainly valuable and establish some kind of connection between the different writers. But why separate the ideas from the facts as if they had nothing to do with each other? Is not the interest of literature, as well as its importance as an educational discipline, precisely in this connection of facts with ideas? How much better would it have been to state some important characteristic of a period and then proceed directly to the illustrations, thus impressing the thesis upon the student's mind. This does not at all mean that a

general introductory chapter for each new period is useless. On the contrary; but it is wrong to think that it is enough and that the remainder of the work need only be dry erudition to meet "examination requirements." The fundamental ideas of French Romanticism, for instance, are well set forth in the introduction, but it is to be feared that the student will have forgotten all about it by the time he reaches the authors concerned.

Moreover, the "general views" seem sometimes insufficient. The book being intended for beginners, they ought to be given some hints not only as to the chronological succession of literary standards, but as to the logic of the literary evolution: what is the relation between the eighteenth century and Romanticism at the opening of the nineteenth century? Why does Romanticism overthrow Classicism, and Realism Romanticism? Why does one form of art precede the other and not vice-versa? and so forth.

Again, a few words concerning the relations of literature with social and political events nearly always throw great light on literary subjects. How is a student to understand the seventeenth century and the almost total lack of individuality of many of its greatest writers, if you do not remind him of the autocratic system of government of Richelieu and Louis XIV, and point out how those rulers have crushed deliberately all attempts at originality in all domains of life. Historical factors explain, in the main, the whole literature of the time and not only isolated facts like the *Satire Ménippée* or the *Hôtel de Rambouillet*.

According to the same principle, some references to the religious organization of the Middle Ages would have explained why Calvin happened to lay so much stress on the doctrine of predestination by which he endeavored to take away from the Church the power of salvation in order to give all credit for it to God alone.

Another fact showing to what extent the authors allowed themselves to be guided by purely external considerations is the unhappy division of the centuries into Poetry, Drama, Prose. First of all, Drama does not correspond to Prose and Poetry, but for example, to Lyric Poetry, Novel, Satire. Of course the authors did not wish to divide the treatment of Drama which in some periods would belong at once to Poetry and to Prose, therefore they introduced this extra chap-

ter. But very nearly the same difficulty occurs elsewhere. For instance, Chateaubriand the prose Romanticist will be in one chapter, and Lamartine the verse Romanticist in the other; while on the other hand Béranger and de Vigny will be treated under the same heading. Such a division as Prose and Poetry might be adopted perhaps for early literature, when there was a kind of tacit convention that such and such a subject ought necessarily to be treated in prose, while another one was properly treated only in verse. It can no more apply in a time of such complex conditions in literature as the nineteenth century; or else every attempt at understanding one's subject is, *a priori*, vain, and one sees such exceedingly surprising things as Murger, Karr and Sue appearing in the same chapter and on the same page with A. Thierry and Guizot (p. 269), and merely in different paragraphs.

There are a few regrettable misprints: Molière was not born 1662 (p. 132), and Racine's "Plaideurs" are of 1668 not 1688 as given twice on the same page (p. 139). It might also be well to adopt for the play of Corneille either the French name for both Horace and Curiace, or the Latin for both (pp. 113-114).

The above criticisms ought not to make us blind to the serious qualities of the book which in many respects is a distinct improvement on other similar attempts. Though it is yet far from an ideal History of French Literature for beginners and reminds one more of a work of reference than of a really intelligent introduction to the subject, it deserves in part the success with which it has met both in this country and in England.

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CORNEILLE'S *Cinna*.

To the Editors of *Mod. Lang. Notes*.

SIRS:—Will you permit me a few words of protest against the nature of the criticisms brought by Mr. Ingraham in your last issue against some of the notes in my recent edition of Corneille's *Cinna*.